



# Fort BLISS



GARRISON COMMAND NEWSLETTER

**April/May/June 2014**



# DAYLEY'S UPDATE

The garrison command plays a critical role in the overall success of the installation, proudly performing the same role the garrison has performed since 1893. The garrison is comprised of highly talented Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians who perform at a high level and sustain that level of unprecedented support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Due to their efforts, Fort Bliss has become the flagship installation in the Department of Defense, and the Army post of choice for all aspects of training.

We have experienced unprecedented successes as an Army post in the past 25 months. I'm very proud of how we sustained the highest levels of training support for Fort Bliss units, special operations, Reserve component units, and mobilizing and demobilizing Soldiers and units. The quality-of-life programs and facilities for Soldiers, families, retirees, and DA civilians stand out among all other installations.

Another great success is our close partnership with the city of El Paso, and organizations in West Texas and Southern New Mexico. I consider our approach in developing cohesive teams as the model other installations should embrace, especially when contending with reduced resources (people, time and money).

I leave Fort Bliss with mixed feelings, as each time I return I see so many familiar faces that it always seems like old home week. I relinquish command with a sense of accomplishment, thanks to all the garrison staff and empowering support and advocacy I have received from our senior commander, Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland.

I was very proud to serve as the Fort Bliss garrison commander, as this was "where I grew up" as an Army officer, and I owe Fort Bliss and the community my very best effort.

Fort Bliss is a wonderful place to live and serve, and the people of El Paso and the surrounding communities are the most patriotic and comprise the most supportive communities of any installation in the nation.

I'm very proud of our civilian and military workforce and appreciate their tremendous efforts and accomplishments. I will miss them dearly, and I wish Col. Thomas E. Munsey and his family great success at their new Army home.



Col. Brant V. Dayley  
Fort Bliss Garrison Commander



## Season opening

Photo by Wendy Brown  
Garrison Public Affairs

Karen Davis puts out a sign for the soap decks designed for her Desert Beauty homemade soaps at the opening of the Old Fort Bliss Replica Traders' Market April 4.

The market, located at the corner of Pershing and Pleasonton, takes place every Friday except holiday Fridays from 4 to 6 p.m. through Sept. 26.

Goods for sale include homemade soaps, wooden puzzles, jams, pickled vegetables, knitted goods and much more. The market will also include vegetables from the replica's garden, and tomatoes are expected in about four weeks, said Wanda Kienzle, education program director for the Old Fort Bliss Replica Museum.





Soldiers eat during the 2014 Smucker's Mission: Breakfast held at Biggs Park May 21.

## 17,000 choose pancakes over pushups

Story by Wendy Brown  
Garrison Public Affairs

Given the choice of pancakes over pushups, more than 17,000 members of the Fort Bliss community chose pancakes.

"Who doesn't love pancakes?" asked Staff Sgt. Frederick Thomas, 80th Civil Affairs Battalion, rhetorically while expressing his appreciation for a free breakfast of pancakes, muffins, biscuits, sausage, coffee, juice and more at Biggs Park May 21.

Fort Bliss became the fifth military installation to host the Smucker's Mission: Breakfast after winning a commissary display contest in 2013. Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, hosted the event last year and more than 15,000 attended. This year's event set a new record.

Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss Commander, said the post received a great opportunity, and he thanked company officials for being generous Americans.

"I see despite the fact we have about 10,000 Soldiers in the field today, there are still plenty of Soldiers here who opted for pancakes instead of pushups," said MacFarland, making reference to Soldiers in the field for Network Integration

Evaluation 14.2 and "Push Ups or Pancakes," the Fort Bliss marketing slogan for the event. "Good choice. Good choice."

A fair number of Soldiers attended the event in physical training attire, indicating perhaps they had chosen both pushups and pancakes that morning.

Richard Smucker, the company's chief executive officer, thanked everyone for their service to the country.

"We are deeply honored to be here," he said. "We are deeply honored to see such a great view looking out over the Soldiers who support our country and protect our families. So thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts."

Michael Mena, director of the Fort Bliss Commissary, said everyone who works at the store is extremely proud of winning the contest.

"This is what it's all about, partnering with the community and showing the Soldiers we care," Mena said. "I wish I could do this for them every day."

Bill Ketcherside, Fort Bliss Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation special events chief, said volunteers started cooking pancakes at 3 a.m. in anticipation of the 7:30 a.m. start time. Upon entry, visitors

received a color-coded ticket that brought them to four identical stations to receive food. The idea was to ensure the crowd was evenly distributed amongst the stations.

The cooks expected to make more than 60,000 pancakes, Ketcherside said.

Due to the breakfast, the post will have a well trained force of volunteers able to handle food at upcoming events. More than 125 volunteers passed the Fort Bliss food handler's training course in order to make and serve food for the event, Ketcherside said.

Kim Donley Garner, a volunteer from Army Community Service, said she and her friends had a great time getting up early to make pancakes. "We're all super excited, and it's even more exciting knowing we're making pancakes for Soldiers and family members," she said.

1st Sgt. Daniel Rosenberry, 72nd Brigade Support Battalion, 212th Fires Brigade, 1st hArmored Division, said it was great to see all the Soldiers come out and eat. "It's a great gift to the Soldiers, and we're happy," he said.



# Fort Bliss Celebrates 239th Army Birthday

Story by Sgt. Benjamin Kullman  
1st Armored Division Public Affairs

Joining ceremonies from Army units throughout America and the world, Fort Bliss celebrated 239 years of the United States Army in grand style.

The United States Army, first created as the Continental Army June 14, 1775, by the Continental Congress, began as a unified Army for the colonies to fight Great Britain.

With George Washington appointed as its commander, the Army was initially led by men who had served in the British Army, or colonial militias, and brought much of British military heritage with them.

Fort Bliss acknowledged this history and heritage by planning and hosting several events across post.

The festivities began with a post-wide run led by the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland, with participation from more than 7,600 Soldiers from units throughout Fort Bliss.

"As members of the American profession of arms, it is our duty to honor our chosen service, the United States Army, and those who have died or sacrificed in its ranks," said MacFarland before the run, "So, as you run today, and if you begin to tire, think about our predecessors, Soldiers who marched through sweltering jungles, across blistering deserts, or climbed over snow capped mountains in order to defeat America's enemies and provide hope to people around the world. Stay with your units and its colors, as they did. Uphold their honor and yours... show that you are a worthy successor and deserve the title of American Soldier."

Following the post run, representatives from command teams of the brigades assigned to Fort Bliss gathered on Noel Parade Field to conduct a Massing of the Colors ceremony in observance of the Army's birthday.

The Massing ceremony pays homage to the history of the Army by observing the long history of the United States Army, its committed service, and its accomplishments.

The Massing of the Colors was touched off by a parachute jump onto the field by Col. Jason Halloren from the "Iron Eagles", Combat Aviation Brigade and Capt. Andrew Walko from "Ready First", 1st Brigade Combat Team.

Halloren delivered the Nation's colors and Walko delivered the Army Colors to Maj. Gen. MacFarland and Command Sgt. Maj. Lance P. Lehr the 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss, command sergeant major.



Command Sgt. Maj. Lance P. Lehr, senior enlisted advisor, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss (center), carries out the long-standing tradition of cutting the Army's birthday cake with the two youngest Soldiers at Fort Bliss, Pvt. Nia N. Wilson (center left), 17, and Pvt. Alicia Snellbaker (center right), 18, during a celebration June 13 at Noel Field on West Fort Bliss.

Those participating in the ceremony across the ranks became aware of the significance of the event including Pfc. Wesley Cameron, HHB 4/1 FA, who volunteered to be an usher during the ceremony.

"I feel proud," said Cameron, "It makes me aware of how many years the Army has been serving. I'm proud to be a part of anything that tremendous."

During the ceremony, the history of the United States Army began to take shape as decorated Soldiers, from Bronze Star recipients to those awarded the Purple Heart, presented Command Sgt. Maj. Lehr and Maj. Gen. MacFarland campaign-streamers to be placed on the Army Flag.

"In the 239 years since the birth of the United States Army, we have decorated our colors with 187 battle and campaign streamers," MacFarland said. "Each of those streamers represents a part of our legacy as American Soldiers."

As the streamers, remembrances of past campaigns and battles, grew it was apparent that the history of the United States Army mirrors that of the country it serves and defends.

"Each represents the blood, sweat and tears of our predecessors, and for our most recent campaigns, our own. They remind us that the Soldiers of the past and the Soldiers of today are forever linked to one another, from Bunker Hill to Baghdad and beyond," he said.

"They remind us that we are all Soldiers in the most powerful and successful Army the world has ever seen. They remind us that we are unique in history in that since our inception, we have fought not to conquer, but to liberate," MacFarland said. "That is why the 'liberty cap' rests on top of a bayonet point on the U.S. Army's colors."





# First female FA Soldiers prepare for combat

Story by Tulara McCauley  
DoMaD Public Affairs

Battery B, 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and a detachment with 1st Bn., 171st FA MLRS, Oklahoma Army National Guard, arrived at Fort Bliss, May 6 to begin mobilization for an upcoming deployment.

Capt. Randall "Randy" F. Wright, from Lawton, Oklahoma, battery B commander, was confident of his troops' abilities. The unit is a fifty-fifty mix of combat veterans and new Soldiers. "My expectations are that we will exceed the standards," said Wright. "We are here to validate the training that we've already done to this point and I expect them to perform for me as they have done historically. It's a very talented group of Soldiers.

As a National Guard unit, they don't get to practice as often, but their proficiencies are high."

For the first time in 91 years, the 1st Bn., 158th FA, has integrated female Soldiers into its ranks. The introduction of two females into the all-male unit in November was successful. Both Soldiers volunteered to deploy with the unit.

"We're turning a page in history," said Wright. "It's a great opportunity for women, the field artillery community and for the Oklahoma National Guard. Both of the young ladies are outstanding Soldiers. We can't send rockets downrange without fire direction specialists controlling the fires and that's what they do. They've been very active in our live-fire certifications. Their skill level and proficiency is not affected by their gender."

Pfc. Makyla K. McKean, 18, from Elgin, Oklahoma,

is a nursing student. While McKean was in Advanced Individual Training, she heard about the upcoming deployment. When she went to her first drill Nov. 2013, McKean asked to be transferred and was immediately moved to Battery B.

"I spoke to my recruiter and found out that not very many females have jumped into this Military Occupational Specialty," said McKean. "They need to get their hands on it. It's kind of cool that you get to tell rockets where to go. No one thinks of girls shooting rockets. I think more females should go for it."

Pfc. Jerra-Amie N. Hodges, 19, also from Lawton, agreed with McKean. "No other women have done this MOS, and this is my part of paving the way for females who want to serve in combat arms," said Hodges. "Initially, when we were briefed, we would hear them say 'Guys – and females.' They didn't want to say the wrong thing, but now we are all comfortable with each other. I like that the unit doesn't baby us." Both Soldiers commended the command group for making the transition into the unit seamless.

"I love my leadership," said McKean. "The commander and first sergeant really care about everybody in the unit."

"Everybody is doing what they are supposed to be doing, and that's what we need from our leadership," said Hodges. "Thank you to everyone who helped us get where we are. It's pretty awesome that we get to deploy not even a year after we finished basic training."

From left, Pfc. John Gablemann, Jerra-Amie N. Hodges, Makyla K. McKean and Justin Harper, fire direction specialists with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 158th Field Artillery Multiple Launch Rocket System, Oklahoma Army National Guard, pose for a photo May 9, at McGregor Range, New Mexico.





# Fort Bliss remembers



Spc. Joshua Symborski, a Soldier assigned to 1st Armored Division Band, performs "Taps" during the Memorial Day ceremony at the National Cemetery, May 26.

Story by Tulara McCauley  
DoMaD Public Affairs

A community came together to pay homage to its heroes and the families they left behind.

Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss commander, Command Sgt. Maj. Lance P. Lehr, 1st AD and Fort Bliss command sergeant major, and Lt. Col. Karen Meeker, 1st AD chaplain, hosted the Memorial Day ceremony at the National Cemetery, May 26.

More than 300 Soldiers and civilians showed up for the early morning ceremony at the foot of the Franklin Mountains. Veterans groups, Blue and Gold Star wives and mothers, dignitaries and high school students ringed the center of the cemetery. The crowd spilled out into the symmetrical rows of head stones, some people standing near their fallen family member. Two World War II era aircraft circled overhead, to the wonder of both adults and children.

The massing of the colors, by the Joint Task Force North Color Guard, was accompanied by patriotic numbers by the 1st AD band. Somber musical selections from "We Were Soldiers" were then played. The silence following the music was punctuated by the

echoing report of the cannons as the salute batteries fired a twenty-one gun salute. Smoke from the guns billowed through the cemetery, hugging the sacred ground.

"It was an attempt for healing and closure for our nation that Memorial Day was born," said MacFarland. "Healing and closure are difficult for those left behind. They bear the burden of loss for the rest of their lives and so we honor them too, at ceremonies such as these. It gives us hope through the knowledge that quiet heroes are among us just awaiting the moment when they will be called upon to put their courage into action."

MacFarland expressed fresh grief when referring to a Fort Bliss Soldier who recently succumbed to injuries sustained in combat.

"It's been just three days since we laid to rest Command Sgt. Maj. Martin R. Barreras, 2nd battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, of the 1st AD," MacFarland said. "Command Sgt. Maj Barreras was not only willing to go where he sent his soldiers, but he led them there from the front. This is the essence of leadership by example."

The commanding general's remarks were followed by a powerful rendition of "The Last Full Measure of De-

votion," sung by Spc. Joseph Leveston. MacFarland and Mary E. Vega, Fort Bliss National Cemetery administer, then emplaced the ceremonial wreath. Spc. Joshua Symborski, performed "Taps," with mournful notes shimmering through the air.

After the colors were retired, a group of Native American veterans invited the audience to witness a memorial tribute to those lost in battle. Using an eagle feather to disperse smoke of a burning incense of carbon and sage, the Eagle Claw Warrior Society purified the area. Sgt. Jesus Padilla, Sr. (retired), United States Marine Corps, knelt at the base of the ceremonial wreath to dig a hole. He delicately buried the ashes symbolizing all living beings return to the ground.

A solitary hawk circled overhead, to the delight of Native Americans.



Using an eagle feather to disperse smoke of a burning incense of carbon and sage, the Eagle Claw Warrior Society purifies the burial ground at the Memorial Day ceremony at the National Cemetery, May 26.





# Safety information flows for DPTMS in park

Story by Wendy Brown  
Fort Bliss Bugle Staff

The Western Diamondback Rattlesnake hissed and rattled from inside the thick plastic container as Justin Carey cautiously walked around with it in his hands.

Carey wanted everyone to have a chance to see the snake, but not everyone wanted to see it. Some moved away as Carey approached.

This was the Fort Bliss Directorate of Plans, Training Mobilization and Security's annual safety and organizational day at Biggs Park May 2, and no matter how thick the plastic, how carefully Carey walked and how tightly the snap-down handles held down the lid, they were not taking any chances. They were going to be safe.

Sal Quintanilla, community outreach representative for the West Texas Regional Poison Center, brought the snake, as well as a milk snake and a gopher snake (commonly called a bull snake in El Paso), and a host of other creepy crawlies along with him for a talk about venomous creatures.

The Western Diamondback causes 90 percent of venomous snake bites in the El Paso area, Quintanilla said, and the best course of action if someone is bitten is to get the person to a doctor as soon as possible. Too often, snake bite kits only serve to make the poison spread more quickly, he said.

Other talks during the event concerned fire safety, injury prevention, water safety, motorcycle and vehicle safety, pet safety and more, said Yadira Barrios, organizer of the event and the directorate's security officer.

The event is mandatory, Barrios said, but takes place in the park so after the safety talks, employees can enjoy freshly grilled hotdogs and hamburgers, as well as outside recreational activities.

Quintanilla said people can call 1-800-222-1222 to talk to a pharmacist about issues involving poison 24-hours a day. Also, people can call his office at 534-3802 to schedule a free talk for groups of 35 people or more, he said.

Ramon Herrera, research and management assistant for Environmental Services, reminded people not to leave their pets inside vehicles, especially during the hot El Paso summer.

"That's a big no-no," Herrera said. "Not just for the safety of the animal, but also because folks get involved and it turns into an argument, a fight."

Carlos Rodriguez, a security specialist who attended the event, said the safety information is necessary each year because unfortunately, common sense is not common practice. "Safety needs to be integrated into everything you do," he said. "That's how you get a safety

culture."

Rodriguez said he appreciated the fact that the safety day featured seasonal information and gave people information they could take home to family members.

Steve Rote, an administrator for the directorate who largely works with information technology, said he retired from the U.S. Army, and has attended many safety briefings, but it is always good to have a reminder.

Rote, a father of six, said he is always watching what his children do in terms of safety.

Renee Bryant, an administrative specialist with the training division, said she learned several safety tips she will integrate into her life, such as washing her hands for a full 20 seconds and having the poison center's number on her refrigerator.

"It's great," Bryant said of the event. "It's very informative."



Steve Pate, Ft. Bliss Simulation Center, Senior Simulations Operations Specialist, looks at a Western Diamondback Rattlesnake in a plastic container during the Fort Bliss Garrison Command Directorate of Plans, Training Mobilization and Security safety and organizational day at Biggs Park May 2. The rattlesnake does not have a name, said Sal Quintanilla, community outreach representative for the West Texas Regional Poison Center at University Medical Center of El Paso.



# Information flows at education summit

Story by Wendy Brown  
Garrison Public Affairs

The Fort Bliss Education Summit at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center May 6 featured information about the past, present and future of education in El Paso.

In the past, Army and school officials worked together to find a way for Fort Bliss children without a fully fixed address to enroll in a school where their family would likely move, keeping many children from having to attend two schools in one semester.

In the present — the same day as the education summit — the El Paso Independent School District Board of Managers approved open enrollment and made it easier for Fort Bliss employees to register their children at schools on or close to the base.

In terms of the future, presenters and attendees said they hope to increase the number of high school graduates, the number of high school graduates who go on to college and the number of dual-credit classes available to high school students, as well as create partnerships with the new El Paso Community College campus planned on Fort Bliss.

Approximately 50 educators, Soldiers and community leaders attended the four-hour summit, and Deborah Trexler, Youth Education Support Services Director Child, Youth & School Services Fort Bliss, encouraged the Soldiers present to share the information they gained with their units.

Maj. Gen. Sean B. MacFarland, 1st Armored Division and Fort Bliss Commander, opened the summit by noting there are more than 10,500 military-connected students in El Paso area schools, and more than 16 percent of Soldiers take advantage of tuition assistance to take college classes — the most of any installation in the Army.

Post secondary education is also an important priority on Fort Bliss, and a new El Paso Community College campus on post will increase access to classes.

Ernst Roberts, vice president of administration and financial operations at El Paso Community College, said the college has six campuses in El Paso, and plans to build a seventh on Fort Bliss. "The Fort Bliss initiative is probably one of the most exciting things that we are involved with right now," he said.

The college has hired Smith Group JJR, headquartered in Detroit, which retained local architectural firm Mijares Mora, and discussions have begun about the timeline and campus concept, Roberts said.

The building will be the college's first LEED Certified building, Roberts said. LEED Certification assures buildings have met environmental and energy standards, depending on the level of certification.

The 70-acre campus will be located to the north of the William Beaumont Army Medical Center replacement hospital, and Roberts said he expects students in medical programs at the college's Rio Grande campus would be able to do clinical training at the hospital.

"We probably are not going to be shutting down Rio Grande, but I think what we've got is a real opportunity to perhaps create a satellite center out at the Fort Bliss campus that would allow us to grow our allied health programs," Roberts said. "We would welcome that, because those programs currently have, in many cases, a two-year waiting list of students to get into them." Roberts said college officials hope to see the campus grow to 200 acres, because after seven to 10 years, it will likely become the largest EPCC campus.

Another of the event's key speakers was Facon, who informed attendees about DoDEA grants.

Facon said Department of Defense Education Activity is one of two federal school systems in the nation, the other being the Bureau of Indian Education, and although DoDEA has schools worldwide and a few in the United States, the majority of military-connected children attend public schools in the United States.

"We recognized there was an opportunity for DoDEA as a school system to share our resources, not only just funding, but also professional development and other support mechanisms with public school districts," Facon said.

DoDEA officials determined the best way to do that was to create a grant program, and the organization has distributed more than \$270 million in grant money to 134 school districts, including El Paso and Socorro school districts, Facon said.

El Paso has received \$6.8 million in grants, and Socorro received a grant for \$2.5 million last year, Facon said.

Amy Canales, EPISD assistant director for curriculum and instruction

for elementary science, talked about how district officials have used the money to pay for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics programs and a greenhouse.

Schools must comply with specific criteria in order to qualify for the grant money, and the first is that the district as a whole must have at least a 5 percent military population, Canales said.

The second is that the school must have a 15 percent military population, Canales said, and the determination is based on impact aid data.

MacFarland encouraged everyone to tell parents to make sure they fill out the form that identifies students as military connected students so schools can remain eligible for grant money or become eligible. "These thresholds are important," he said, and more schools might become eligible for grant money if more military parents filled out impact aid forms.



Xavier De La Torre, superintendent of Ysleta Independent School District, speaks at the Fort Bliss Education Summit at the Centennial Banquet and Conference Center May 6.





## WTB Soldiers partner with emergency services

Story by Wendy Brown  
Garrison Public Affairs

Retired Staff Sgt. Richard Wilson is grateful for a partnership between the Directorate of Emergency Services and the Warrior Transition Battalion.

"Instead of being at home looking for a job and getting stressed out and depressed, I come here and volunteer and it feels like you're still part of the military," Wilson said of his volunteer job at the directorate. "That's what I like about being here."

Wilson, on terminal leave until May 19, is one of eight Soldiers in the past year who have participated in a program between the Fort Bliss WTB and the Directorate of Emergency Services, said Jessica Ashmore, transition coordinator with Fort Bliss WTB.

The battalion provides medical services and transition planning so wounded Soldiers can rehabilitate and go back to a regular unit or leave the Army and enter a civilian career. The mission of a Soldier in the battalion is to heal.

Wilson said he would like to stay in the Army, but Army officials say it is not possible because of his back. "This is all I know, and I love my job," he said. "Unfortunately, the Army says you have to get out because of my medical situation."

Wilson spent 18 years in the Army, but injured his back after years of heavy lifting as a cargo specialist. He came to the battalion when officials determined he could not stay in the Army, and since then, he has worked on leaving.

Wilson heard Sgt. Maj. Michael Barnes of the Directorate of Emergency Services, speak about a partnership between the battalion and the directorate, and asked him about volunteering.

Wilson started volunteering December 2013, and since then, he

has spent approximately 30 hours a week dispensing equipment, helping manage the directorate's fleet of vehicles, inspecting vehicles and bringing vehicles to and from the repair shop.

"Over here, you actually work with civilians and members of the military, and it feels like I'm in the military," Wilson said. "I feel like I'm at home."

The work is similar to what he did as a Soldier, Wilson said, and he is keeping his skill set fresh. He is experienced with logistics and would like to get a job on a military post when he leaves the Army.

Ashmore said the program allows Soldiers who plan to stay in the Army keep their skills sharp, while those who plan to leave can learn new skills.

Barnes said Wilson has done an excellent job working with the directorate, and he is glad the directorate has made volunteer positions available to help transitioning Soldiers.

Ashmore said that although Wilson works with military police, the program includes the fire department as well.

Although Soldiers who work with the fire department cannot assist in putting out fires because they are not certified, they can get a taste of the work and see if it is something they would like to pursue further.

Also, the partnership with the directorate is one of many battalion officials have developed, Ashmore said.

On post, WTB also has partnerships with Brigade Modernization Command, the Network Enterprise Center, the Directorate of Mobilization and Deployment and Signal of Excellence, Ashmore said.

Off post, the battalion has partnerships with the Operation War Fighter Program, as well as the U.S. Marshall, the U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs, the Bureau of Land Management, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"Our Soldiers have a lot of opportunity before they leave, and a lot of them come out having great jobs or a good foundation to start off with," Ashmore said.

The length of time Soldiers volunteer with agencies depends on how long they are with the program. Soldiers who are leaving the Army for medical reasons can be with the battalion for more than a year. The battalion also helps Soldiers with education goals and finding a job, Ashmore said.

For instance, the Soldier and Family Assistance Center has vocational rehabilitation counselors, Army Career and Alumni Program counselors, Texas Veterans Commission representatives and Wounded Warrior Project representatives, Ashmore said, and all are there to help Soldiers.

Since Soldiers in the battalion are still Soldiers and have obligations such as formations and training, volunteer hours are usually between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Ashmore said.

Wilson said he leaves his volunteer job at 3 p.m. and goes to the gym, before the after-work crowds arrive. "Even though I'm leaving the Army, I still need to stay in shape," he said.

In addition to the program with the directorate, Wilson said he is also grateful for the battalion staff. They work hard to find Soldiers jobs and education opportunities, he said.

"They are really helping the Soldiers that need to be helped," Wilson said. "I'm glad there's a WTB in the Army for people like us."



Retired Staff Sgt. Richard Wilson hands Pvt. David Flores, 591st Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, equipment from the cage room at the Directorate of Emergency Services headquarters April 10.